

©CLL 16773 ✓

*A picturization of the drama by
Thompson Buchanan and Wm. A. Brady.*
LIFE

Directed by Charles Vale
~~By Thompson Buchanan.~~

JUL 19 1921 ✓

5 Reels ✓

Notwithstanding the fact that Bill Reid is poor and "out on his own", he is one of the most popular boys at Yale. He has worked his way through college but this has not dimmed the fact that he is a vital necessity to the Yale crew.

In his senior year he is stroke of the crew in the annual boat race with Harvard. Several days before the race, Bill and some other members of the crew row down the river for a little visit to their trainer, Tom Andrews. This visit is a momentous one for Bill for it is here that he meets his divinity. Ruth Stuyvesant. Ruth has motored up with her father, Mr. van Rensselaer Stuyvesant (who has all the wealth and power that the name would imply) accompanied by her fiancé, Tom Burnett, and her brother Ralph. The three are Yale men and are keenly interested in the coming race, and motored from New York to the training quarters to get inside information as to the chances of winning.

Ruth goes rowing with Burnett, and he, being more interested in begging her to marry him immediately than he is in the race, loses control of the boat. When Bill sees that the boat is upset and that Ruth is in danger, he plunges in the river, bringing her safely to shore, leaving her cavalier to swim out as best he can.

Bill is evidently a man of quick decision for when Ruth thanks him, he replies that he saved her life because he loves her. And Ruth forgets "The Family" and the difference in their positions in life and tells him she loves him too. They come to the conclusion that they were written in the stars for each other, and overcome by this that Bill kisses her. They are brought to earth by the sound of Burnett's voice. Burnett, you

remember is Ruth's fiancee, and has overheard the above conversation and witnessed the kiss that followed. Undoubtedly he has grounds for anger, but Ruth does not think so. She decides then and there that she can never marry Burnett, and is more certain than ever that she loves Bill.

Burnett's first impulse is to go to Mr. Stuyvesant with the story of Ruth's amazing infatuation for this unknown Bill Reid, but he feels it useless at the present, for Mr. Stuyvesant has no words of thanks warm enough for the young man who saved his daughter's life. He offers Bill a position in his office in New York, and Bill is delighted and grateful, for a beginning with William Stuyvesant is a great opportunity in itself.

Therefore, Burnett feels that he had better keep quiet for the present, at least, and tells Ruth he forgives her. She responds with a contemptuous toss of her bright head. She doesn't care what he thinks, or does or says. But Burnett appears to be entirely penitent with her. He must not lose her, whatever the cost. It is not that he really loves Ruth. He wants to marry her money. He is the junior partner of Mr. Stuyvesant's, and feels that if he can marry Ruth, his future will be sealed and cemented with gold.

Mr. Stuyvesant is far from knowing the true character of his junior partner. For several years, Burnett has been systematically robbing the firm and managing his crooked activities so cleverly that no one has ever suspected him. Not content with being a crook, himself, Burnett has succeeded in getting Stuyvesant's son Ralph under his thumb. Ralph is a rotter, with no will of his own, and a natural inclination to lead a life that does not lie in the open. He is not at all unwilling, therefore, to be Burnett's accomplice in embezzling the company's funds.

While at the Yale training quarters, Burnett has an unpleasant encounter with a girl who formerly lived in New York as his mistress. She is Grace Andrews, daughter of the Yale trainer. Grace loved Burnett as

though he were her husband. He professed to love her and promised to marry her, but for some reason neglected to keep his promise. Thus it was an easy matter, when he tired of her, to tell her so plainly. Grace has told her parents that she was working all the time she was in New York. They believe her implicitly and are very proud of their beautiful young daughter with her "citified" ways and clothes. Grace tearfully reproaches Burnett for his neglect. She shows her cards quite plainly. It is pathetically evident that she still loves him. Without any camouflage, he tells her that their love is a thing of the past. He further says that he must marry Ruth Stuyvesant, but adds that he does not care a whit for the girl - merely her money.

Grace is miserable at his treatment and wildly jealous of Ruth. When Ralph flirts with her, she welcomes his attentions. (in an effort to make Burnett jealous) and finally agrees to come to New York and live as his mistress.

This, however, instead of making Burnett jealous, merely gives him another of his clever ideas. He now tells Grace that he loves her dearly. Grace is so eager for this to be the truth that it is easy for her to believe it. Then Burnett unfolds his plan. She must go to New York as Ralph's mistress, as she has promised him. Furthermore, she must insist upon the most expensive clothes, jewels and other luxuries. She must literally bleed the weak Ralph to death. Meanwhile, Burnett will continue his shady transactions at the office, and when the truth of the missing securities eventually leaks out, it will be easy to shift the blame entirely on Ralph, for Burnett will have proof that he squandered millions on his extravagant mistress. Then, Burnett says he and Grace can go far away together. Grace's love for Burnett overpowers all else. She is slave to his slightest wish. So she goes to New York and lives as Ralph's extravagant and dominating mistress, although she loathes the very sight of him.

2

-4-

After Bill's college days are over, Mr. Stuyvesant makes good his promise and Bill becomes his confidential secretary. This delights Ruth. Her father, seeing Ruth's evident admiration for Bill, forbids her to have anything to do with him. Mr. Stuyvesant is very fond of Bill as a secretary, but not a son-in-law. It is his fond hope that Ruth and Burnett will marry, for Burnett is the son of an old friend. Ruth, however, frankly refuses to have anything more to do with Burnett and breaks the engagement, but Mr. Stuyvesant hopes it is only a lovers' quarrel.

Grace begs Ralph to buy her a gorgeous rope of pearls at Tiffany's, and as Ralph adores the ground she walks on, even her extravagant whim seeming fascinating to him, he promises to get the pearls for her. Finding his bank account too low to cover the purchase, his zeal to keep his promise is so great that he forges a check for twenty thousand on his father. As he clasps the pearls around Grace's fair neck, her smile atones for any qualms of conscience he may have suffered.

Bill, as Stuyvesant's confidential secretary, is supposed to be the only person having access to Stuyvesant's check book, with the exception, of course, of the great financier himself. Consequently when the forgery is known, the detectives turn accusingly to Bill. Ralph and Burnett are eager to have the blame fall on Bill. Burnett hates him because Ruth evidently loves him, while Ralph regards him as a convenient person to shift his dishonesty on. Stuyvesant refuses to believe Bill guilty, and action on the matter is deferred.

Ruth's debut party is to be given that night, and Burnett, knowing that Bill is invited lays the following plan before Grace. She is to dress in the flashiest of all her flashy, costly gowns, and attend the party, and pay marked attention to Bill. Grace has become one of the notorious women of New York - is pointed out as Ralph Stuyvesant's mis-

stress - and Burnett knows that her uninvited presence at Ruth's coming out party will create an unpleasant stir. Grace agrees. Therefore, when the gay party is at its height, in saunters Grace, rouged and swagging, with a flashy gown of indecent cut. Ruth and her father, while not knowing who Grace is, can easily see what she is. Mr. Stuyvesant demands an explanation of her presence, and she replies with a most unconcerned air that Bill Reid invited her. Mr. Stuyvesant orders Bill and Grace out of the house, forbidding either to set foot in it again. Also telling Bill that his services in his office are no longer desired. Ruth is broken hearted - not so much at her father's attitude as at Bill's seeming affiliation with Grace.

Mr. Stuyvesant summons Burnett into the library to discuss the mystery of the forged check and also the later discovery of some missing securities from the vault. Burnett's theories and conversation are so evasive that for the first time Stuyvesant suspects him and says so. Burnett, in a heated moment, grasps Stuyvesant by the throat and strangles him, then switches off the light and joins the dancers. Very few crimes are committed without some witness. This seems to be ordained by a Higher Power. Dutch Joe, a notorious burglar, has stood behind the curtains during the entire scene. He had entered the house with the intention of stealing jewels, but after seeing the murder, flees in horror. Before closing the door, however, he notices a slip of paper, which proves to be a memorandum Burnett dropped which states the entire sum of money he owes Stuyvesant Co. (This runs into millions) Dutch Joe gleefully tucks this in his pocket, with blackmail shining in his eye.

At the investigation that follows the discovery of Mr. Stuyvesant's death, Burnett hints that Bill Reid committed the murder. Ralph, as usual, echoes Burnett. At their instigation Bill is sent for. When the detectives and police find that Bill has recently been discharged by Mr.

stayvesant, and suspected of forging a check, the evidence against him looks so strong that he is handcuffed and taken to prison. Ruth protests wildly, and surprises the whole assemblage by crying out that Bill is her husband. They have been married secretly, for some months.

Barnett and Ralph are now in full control of the money of the firm. They present the facts of the murder to the Governor, with such additions as they see fit, and the result is that Bill is convicted of the murder and condemned to death.

Burnett has an unpleasant surprise when Dutch Joe walks into the office and tells what he knows, and shows the memorandum signed by Burnett. Dutch Joe says grimly that nothing but money will keep his mouth shut. Burnett with a terrible premonition of fear, gives Dutch Joe money. He tells Grace about the affair, and she tells him that the only way out of it is to kill the man. It happens that on Christmas morning, in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, while throngs of people are leaving and entering the church, Burnett puts a bullet through Dutch Joe's heart. It seems now that the way is clear.

It is the night before Bill's execution. Ruth has pleaded desperately with the Governor for a reprieve, but has met with a stern refusal. He tells her that she may see her husband for a few minutes that night, however, to say good-bye, in the presence of the guards. Ruth, accompanied by an old friend of her father's, who believes in Bill's innocence, determine to help him to escape. They have finally convinced McLaren, famous chief of New York detectives, that he is innocent, and McLaren has agreed to help them also. At first it seems an impossible thing to get the warder out of the room, but finally he leaves, leaving McLaren to guard Bill, (not dreaming that McLaren is on the prisoner's side) The moment he is gone Ruth and her father's friend rush Bill out of the house

and into a waiting automobile. McLaren hits himself over the head with a telephone and lies apparently insensible. The window being open, the scene presents the appearance of an escape.

McLaren is now on the trail of the real murderer. Ruth has caused him to suspect Burnett. After careful investigation, McLaren is confident that there has been foul play on Burnett's part. Someone mentions the fact that Burnett was seen by the Cathedral on the morning Dutch Joe was killed. Knowing that Dutch Joe was a notorious criminal, McLaren feels that this clue is worth following up. He discovers that Henry, a pal of Dutch Joe's, has been told that Burnett killed Stuyvesant, and has also been given the slip of paper which Burnett dropped the night of the murder. With money as a reward, it is a n easy matter to obtain a sworn statement from Henry, and to arrange for his services as witness.

Ruth and Bill are lining away to a far ry on a second honeymoon.

When McLaren finds Burnett and confronts him with Henry's sworn statement, Burnett is so terrified that a "third degree" is not necessary. Ralph, also terrified, confesses his forgery, and the two are taken summarily to the penitentiary.

- - - - -

This document is from the Library of Congress
“Motion Picture Copyright Descriptions Collection,
1912-1977”

Collections Summary:

The Motion Picture Copyright Descriptions Collection, Class L and Class M, consists of forms, abstracts, plot summaries, dialogue and continuity scripts, press kits, publicity and other material, submitted for the purpose of enabling descriptive cataloging for motion picture photoplays registered with the United States Copyright Office under Class L and Class M from 1912-1977.

Class L Finding Aid:

<https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/eadmbrsmi.mi020004>

Class M Finding Aid:

<https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/eadmbrsmi.mi021002>



National Audio-Visual Conservation Center
The Library of Congress